

# Take Care of Texas NEWS you can use

TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

JANUARY 2010

## Plan to Participate in Fix a Leak Week

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will sponsor the second annual Fix a Leak Week from March 15 to 21. This week's activities remind Americans to check their plumbing and irrigation systems for leaks.

According to the EPA, 10 percent of homes leak up to 90 gallons or more per day. Making easy repairs to household water leaks can save homeowners more than 10 percent on their water bills.

As part of Fix a Leak Week, participants can pledge online to fix leaks, download teaching resources and helpful tips for detecting and fixing leaks, and attend live demonstrations.

For more information on Fix a Leak Week, visit <[www.epa.gov/watersense/water\\_efficiency/fix\\_a\\_leak.html](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/water_efficiency/fix_a_leak.html)>.



## Small Ways to Lead Big

You can lead your community toward greater environmental action through simple, effective community projects. Consider leading as these Clean Texas members have:

### City of Bryan, Waste Reduction Facility

- presented an educational program on recycling, water conservation, and pollution prevention at 15 local schools;
- promoted composting and mulching at community events; and
- hosted an Earth Day event in their community.



### City of Coppell, Solid Waste Department

- held a lecture series on environmental issues in a Sustainable Living class;
- worked with Coppell High School to monitor local water quality; and
- hosted rainwater harvesting classes with "Make-and-Take Rain Barrels."

### City of Victoria, Environmental Services Department

- hosted a week-long workshop for teachers that promoted water conservation;
- held a naming contest for the city's new compost facility to promote composting and xeriscaping; and
- provided Air Victoria "turn off the light" light-switch

stickers and held an "Energy, Economics, and the Environment (E3)" workshop to encourage residential energy conservation.

For more information on the Clean Texas Program, visit <[www.cleantexas.org](http://www.cleantexas.org)>.

## Landscapes Now Rated for Sustainability

The Sustainable Sites Initiative has developed the first national rating system for sustainable landscapes. These guidelines apply to any type of designed landscape, with or without buildings, and range from shopping malls to single-family homes.

Until now, the most comprehensive guidelines and environmental ratings applied only to buildings. Builders and cities have been able to earn Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification by the U.S. Green Building Council. Future versions of the LEED Green Building Rating System are expected to include sustainable sites criteria.

The Sustainable Sites Initiative uses a point-based rating system, measuring criteria such as soil and vegetation, materials selection, and operations and maintenance. For example, owners of a sustainable site may plant trees in a parking lot, landscape with native plants, or pave with permeable materials to minimize heat and stormwater runoff.

The Sustainable Sites Initiative is a partnership between the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at The University of Texas at Austin, and the United States Botanic Garden, as well as several stakeholder organizations.

For more information, visit <[www.sustainablesites.org](http://www.sustainablesites.org)>.

## Register Now for the Emissions Inventory Workshop

**Jan. 27, J.J. Pickle Center, Austin**

The TCEQ's 2010 Emissions Inventory Workshop will focus on a new Web-based, emissions inventory reporting system. This workshop is designed for engineers, facility environmental managers, business owners, and consultants operating in Texas.

The workshop offers up to four hours of continuing education credits for professional engineers and professional geoscientists.

To register, visit <[www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/events/emissions\\_inventory.html](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/events/emissions_inventory.html)>.



An environmental message brought to you by the Small Business and Environmental Assistance Division.

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## World Water Day Seeks to Improve Water Quality

World Water Day, held every year on March 22, celebrates and promotes the importance of clean water supplies around the world.

The theme for World Water Day 2010 will be "Communicating Water Quality Challenges and Opportunities," to help raise awareness of the importance of water *quality* alongside water *quantity*.

For more information, visit [www.worldwaterday.org](http://www.worldwaterday.org).



## Help Clean Up with the Great American Cleanup

Register now for the 2010 Great American Cleanup, the nation's largest community improvement program. The event takes place annually from March 1 to May 31. Managed by Keep Texas Beautiful, the program provides communities and organizations with free promotional materials and cleanup supplies to help volunteers with projects throughout the state.

Activities may include beautifying parks and recreation areas, cleaning waterways, handling recycling collections, picking up litter, removing graffiti, planting trees, and conducting educational programs and litter-free events. In 2008, over 90,000 volunteers participated in 2,200 events throughout Texas.

Register early to ensure you receive the supplies and promotional materials you need for your local event, as well as to qualify for early-registration incentive prizes. For more information, visit [www.ktb.org/programs/great-american-cleanup.aspx](http://www.ktb.org/programs/great-american-cleanup.aspx).



## Save the Date! TCEQ's Environmental Trade Fair and Conference

Mark your calendar for the TCEQ's Environmental Trade Fair and Conference, scheduled for May 4–5, 2010, at the Austin Convention Center. This annual event is Texas' premier environmental educational forum, considered by many to be one of the best in the country.

For up-to-date information, visit [www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/events/etfc/etf.html](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/events/etfc/etf.html).

## Improve Your Landscape with Texas SmartScape

Texas SmartScape is an interactive how-to guide that teaches how to landscape with native and adapted plants. The program



offers tips to help conserve water, protect the environment, and beautify your home landscape.

Texas SmartScape uses customized information specifically for the climates of the North Central Texas and West Texas regions. The Web site includes an online search engine that helps identify plants that will work best in your yard, as well as tips on care and maintenance.

For more information, or to use Texas SmartScape, visit [www.txsmartscape.com](http://www.txsmartscape.com).

## Highlighted TCEQ Publications

*A Public Water System Guide to Responding to a Backflow Incident (RG-476)* offers detailed instructions for dealing with backflow for water districts, water supply corporations, municipalities, etc.

*A Public Water System Guide to Preparing a Backflow Incident Emergency Response Plan (RG-477)* is a guide for public water systems to use to prepare an emergency response plan to handle a possible backflow incident. The TCEQ recommends the preparation of an emergency response plan as a best management practice.

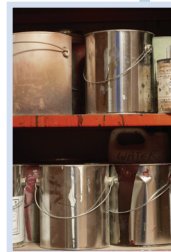
To order TCEQ publications, visit [www.tceq.state.tx.us/publications](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/publications).

## Take Care of Texas Tips

### At Home

### Safely Dispose of Household Hazardous Waste

Household hazardous waste (HHW) includes consumer products containing chemicals that present concerns if improperly used or disposed. Almost all can be safely and legally disposed of in landfills that accept regular trash. However, community collection programs offer a better disposal option for collecting, sharing, and safely disposing of HHW. To find one-day collection events in your area, visit [www.cleanup.org](http://www.cleanup.org).



### Out and About

### Buy a Cleaner Vehicle

The next time you shop for a company or fleet vehicle, consider the benefits of one with a high fuel-economy rating—reducing air emissions and fuel costs. For EPA assistance when purchasing light-duty fleet vehicles, visit [www.epa.gov/fueleconomy](http://www.epa.gov/fueleconomy). The TCEQ offers rebates and grants in certain cases to assist with the purchase of heavy-duty vehicles. Visit [www.terpgrants.org](http://www.terpgrants.org) for more information.

[www.takecareoftexas.org](http://www.takecareoftexas.org)